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FM AHEHBASSY KABUL

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TAGS: ASEC: MOPS, PINS, PINT, PINR, SOPN, MILI, US, AF
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT, NOVEMBER 01-08, 1982

✓ REF: KABUL 1780

1. (C.-ENTIRE TEXT.)
 2. ALL OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY BE USED IN BRIEFING THE PRESS, PROTECTING SOURCES WHERE INDICATED.
 3. SUMMARY: COMPARED TO THE LAST HALF OF OCTOBER, THE LEVEL OF RESISTANCE ACTIVITY IN AND AROUND KABUL DROPPED OFF SLIGHTLY DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF NOVEMBER. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, AN INCREASE IN THE SOUNDS OF NIGHTTIME ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT AND EXCHANGES OF FIRE. THE HOTSPOTS IN AND AROUND THE CAPITAL WERE KOTE SANGI, DEH SABZ, KARTE CHAR AND ARRULAHAN.
 4. GIVEN IMPETUS BY THE NOVEMBER 1 RELEASE OF SOLDIERS AND POLICE WHO HAD COMPLETED THEIR SERVICE, ROADBLOCKS AT MAJOR INTERSECTIONS WERE SET UP TO NET CONSCRIPTS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK. THERE ARE INCREASING REPORTS THAT THE DRA REGIME IS PRESSING INTO SERVICE UNDERAGE AND OVERAGE MALES, AND SENDING THEM TO FIGHT WITHOUT TRAINING. CONCERNING THE CONSCRIPTION OF TRADITIONALLY EXEMPT TRIBESHEN FROM PAKTIA, THERE IS CONFIRMATION THAT AN EARLY OCTOBER ANTI-CONSCRIPTION DEMONSTRATION TOOK PLACE AND THAT MORE RECENT DELEGATIONS OF ELDERS FROM PAKTIA HAVE ALSO PROTESTED THE DECISION. THE DECISION TO CONSCRIPT MEN FROM PAKTIA IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE PARCHAM FACTION OF THE POPA, ESPECIALLY PRIME MINISTER KESHTHAND, AND OPPOSED BY SUCH KHALQI FIGURES AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR GULABZOL, WHO IS FROM PAKTIA. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, DABRAK AND GULABZOL HAVE MET AND AGREED THAT THE PAKTIA CONSCRIPT
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TION ORDER SHOULD BE RESCINDED.

5. THE MAJOR FOCUS OF RUMOR -- AND MOURNING -- HAS BEEN WHAT IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE GREATEST TRAGEDY IN THE MODERN HISTORY OF AFGHAN HIGHWAYS. THOUGH DEFINITIVE ACCOUNTS ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE, HUNDREDS OF AFGHAN CIVILIANS AND SOVIET SOLDIERS DIED OF ASPHYXIATION IN THE 11,100-FOOT SALANG TUNNEL ON THE HIGHWAY TO THE NORTH THROUGH THE HINDU KUSH MOUNTAINS. ACCORDING TO COMMON ELEMENTS OF VARIOUS ACCOUNTS, THE TRAGEDY BEGAN BY A COLLISION IN THE 17.7-MILE TUNNEL AND WAS COMPOUNDED BY SOVIET BLOCKING OF THE ENTRANCES

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AFTER TRAFFIC HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO PILE UP. THOUGH KABUL IS IN HOURNING, DRA REGIME MEDIA HAS NOT MENTIONED THE TRAGEDY.

6. BOMBING OF VILLAGES IN THE PANJSHER VALLEY CONTINUES, THOUGH AT LOWER LEVELS THAN DURING SEPTEMBER. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL PANJSHERI SOURCES, DAHAGE IS LESS IN THE UPPER VALLEY THAN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, AND A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE POPULACE HAS RETURNED TO THE VALLEY. RESISTANCE FORCES CONTINUE TO HARASS THE DRA REGIME GARRISONS FORCING THE REGIME TO SUPPLY ORKHA LARGELY BY HELICOPTER.
END SUMMARY.

7. KABUL ATHOSPHERICS.
RESISTANCE ACTIVIY IN AND AROUND KABUL APPEARS TO HAVE DROPPED SLIGHTLY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF NOVEMBER COMPARED TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF INCIDENTS DURING LATE OCTOBER, ALTHOUGH THE DECIBEL LEVEL IN THE CITY ROSE SLIGHTLY. ON THREE NIGHTS DURING THE WEEK SOUNDS OF ARTILLERY FIRE FROM BEYOND THE AIRPORT WERE HEARD IN THE NORTHERN PORTION OF TOWN. NIGHTTIME EXCHANGES OF FIRE WERE COMMON IN TRADITIONAL TROUBLE AREAS SUCH AS KARTE SEH, KARTE CHAR, AND KHAIR KHANA, AND BURSTS OF MACHINE GUN FIRE STARTLED RESIDENTS IN THE HIGH-RENT SHARE NAU DISTRICT AT SIX P.M. ON NOVEMBER 2. IN ADDITION TO THE INCIDENTS IN DEH SABZ, KARTE CHAR, AND KOTE SANGE DETAILED BELOW, THERE WAS A RESISTANCE ATTACK NOVEMBER 3 ON A SOVIET CAMP NEAR DARULAHAN PALACE DURING WHICH TWO ARMORED VEHICLES WERE DESTROYED BY ROCKETS.

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8. THE DEH SABZ AREA.
THE DEH SABZ AREA, WHICH LIES JUST NORTH AND NORTHEAST OF THE KABUL AIRPORT AND STRETCHES TO THE SHOMALI AREA TO THE NORTHWEST, HAS BEEN TROUBLE SPOT FOR THE REGIME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. MILITARY POSTS ARE COMMONLY ATTACKED. THE DEFECTION RATE OF AFGHAN TROOPS IS VERY HIGH, AND IT IS FROM THIS AREA THAT MOST ATTACKKS ON THE KABUL AIRPORT ARE STAGED. AS WITH

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THE SHOHALI REGION, THERE APPEAR TO BE LINKS BETWEEN THE DEH
SABZ HAJAHIDEEN AND THE PANJSHIR RESISTANCE GROUPS LED BY MASUD.

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ON OCTOBER 31 PANJSHER HUAHIDEEN ARE SAID TO HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH DEH SABZ GROUPS TO ATTACK A SOVIET POST AT TARAKHAIL IN THE DEH SABZ REGION. THE POST WAS REPORTEDLY OVERRUN, AND THE HUAHIDEEN MAY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN STEALING SOME TANKS OR ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS. FOLLOWING THE ATTACK, SOVIET TROOPS, REPORTEDLY LOOKING FOR TANKS, CAME OUT IN FORCE NEAR QARDASHMAN, TOWARD THE SHOHAI, AND VILLAGES IN THE AREA WERE BOMBARDED IN RETALIATION.

9. KARTE CHAR. ON NOVEMBER 5, THE OCCUPANTS OF A JEEP MOVING THROUGH THE KARTE CHAR DISTRICT IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE CITY THREW A BOMB INTO THE COMPOUND OF A HOUSE FORMERLY LEASED BY USAID AND NOW OCCUPIED BY RUSSIANS. THE BOMB EXPLODED, BUT THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES, IF ANY, IS NOT KNOWN. SHORTLY AFTER THE INCIDENT, A LARGE NUMBER OF RUSSIANS GATHERED AT THE SITE, AND AN AFGHAN BOY WHO HAPPENED TO BE PASSING BY AT THE TIME WAS SEIZED AND TAKEN INTO THE COMPOUND. DESPITE THE PROTESTS OF AFGHANS LIVING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT THE BOY HAD HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE INCIDENT, HE WAS TAKEN FROM THE COMPOUND UNDER RUSSIAN ESCORT AND HAS NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE.

10. KOTE SANGI. LIKE THE DEH SABZ AREA, KOTE SANGI ON THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE CAPITAL CONTINUES TO BE A SECURITY PROBLEM FOR THE REGIME. ON THE EVENING OF OCTOBER 26 RESISTANCE FIGHTERS SURROUNDED A POLICE POST NOT FAR FROM THE KOTE SANGI CROSSROADS. IN THE ENSUING FIGHT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF REGIME SECURITY FORCES WERE CAPTURED OR SURRENDERED TO THE HUAHIDEEN. THE BATTLE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A CALL OF ALLAHU AKBAR SO MUCH AMPLIFIED BY LOUDSPEAKERS THAT THEY COULD BE HEARD THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN PART OF TOWN. IN EARLY NOVEMBER A CARPET DEALER IN KOTE SANGI WHO WAS THOUGHT TO BE A KHAD INFORMANT WAS SHOT AND
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KILLED IN THE EARLY EVENING IN A LOCAL PARK. A REGIME OUTPOST MANNED BY DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTION FORCES BETWEEN KOTE SANGE AND DARULAHAN WAS ATTACKED ON NOVEMBER 5 WITH TWO DEFENDERS KILLED AND THREE ABDUCTED BY THE ATTACKERS.

11. TRAGEDY IN THE SALANG TUNNEL. SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED IN THE SALANG TUNNEL LAST WEEK. JUST EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED AND HOW IT HAPPENED IS NOT YET CLEAR, AS THERE ARE NUMEROUS, CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS CIRCULATING KABUL OF WHAT HAS BECOME THE MAIN FOCUS OF CONVERSATION AND MOURNING. MOST ACCOUNTS AGREE THAT ON NOVEMBER 2 OR 3 HUNDREDS OF AFGHAN CIVILIANS AND SOVIET SOLDIERS DIED IN THE

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2.6 KILOMETER (1.7 MILE) SOVIET-BUILT TUNNEL WHICH CUTS THROUGH THE HINDU KUSH MOUNTAINS AT AN ALTITUDE OF 3,363 METERS (11,100 FEET)

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT IS BASED ON THE COMMON FEATURES OF VARIOUS RUMORS CURRENT IN KABUL, ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT YET VOUCH FOR ITS ACCURACY.

12. IN THE LATE AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 2ND OR 3RD, THERE WAS A COLLISION IN THE TUNNEL BETWEEN THE LEAD VEHICLE OF A SOVIET CONVOY PROCEEDING SOUTH AND A COMMERCIAL VEHICLE HEADING NORTH. (SOME VERSIONS HAVE IT THAT THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE WAS A FUEL TRUCK AND THAT THE CRASH RESULTED IN AN EXPLOSION AND FIRE WHICH HELPED EXHAUST OXYGEN FROM THE TUNNEL WHOSE FEW ELECTRICALLY DRIVEN VENTILATORS HAVE NOT WORKED FOR OVER A YEAR.) IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CRASH, TRAFFIC WAS APPARENTLY NOT PREVENTED FROM ENTERING

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THE 5.2-METER WIDE BY 7.6-METER HIGH (17 BY
25 FEET) TUNNEL

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FROM BOTH ITS ENDS, AND A COLOSSAL TRAFFIC JAM ENSUED.

13. SUBSEQUENTLY, ACCORDING TO ALMOST ALL ACCOUNTS, SOVIET TROOPS BLOCKED BOTH ENTRANCES TO THE TUNNEL WITH TANKS OR TRUCKS THEREBY CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR THE TRAGEDY WHICH ENSUED. AFGHANS WERE FORCIBLY PREVENTED FROM LEAVING THE TUNNEL, PERHAPS BECAUSE THE SOVIETS BELIEVED THAT A RESISTANCE ACTION WAS IN PROGRESS INSIDE. WHILE SOME REPORTS OF THE TRAGEDY TELL OF FIGHTING INSIDE OR AT THE ENTRANCES OF THE TUNNEL AND THE USE OF NON-LETHAL GAS, ALL ACCOUNTS AGREE THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE DEATHS WAS DUE TO ASPHYXIATION CAUSED BY THE ACCUMULATED EXHAUST GASES IN THE POORLY-VENTILATED TUNNEL. WHERE VEHICLE ENGINES WERE KEPT RUNNING TO PREVENT DEATH FROM THE EXTREME COLD. ALTHOUGH PRECISE INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE TUNNEL MAY HAVE BEEN CLOSED FOR AS LONG AS TWO DAYS.

14. ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF AFGHAN AND SOVIET DEAD VARY. A COMMON FIGURE FOR SOVIET DEATHS IS 700, WITH SOME 200 INJURED BROUGHT TO KABUL FOR TREATMENT. (FOR THE LAST THREE OR FOUR NIGHTS THERE HAS BEEN AN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBER OF FIXED WING SOVIET PLANES LANDING IN KABUL, PERHAPS BRINGING THE DEAD OR WOUNDED.) ESTIMATES OF AFGHAN DEAD RANGE FROM 400 TO 2,000 WITH OVER 200 INJURED BEING TREATED AT JABUL-US-SERAJ, SOUTH OF THE SALANG. WHATEVER THE BODY COUNT, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO ONE IN KABUL WHO HAS NOT LOST A RELATIVE OR FRIEND IN THE SALANG TRAGEDY AND THE CAPITAL IS A CITY IN MOURNING.

15. THERE IS GROWING ANGER IN KABUL ABOUT WHAT IS SURELY ONE OF THE WORST TRAGEDIES IN THE MODERN HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN'S HIGHWAYS, AND THE RESENTMENT HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE REGIME'S RELUCTANCE TO GIVE ANY ACCOUNT OF WHAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED. THE ONLY OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF EVENTS IN THE SALANG HAS BEEN A LENGTHENING
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OF THE TIME NECESSARY TO READ THE DEATH NOTICES ON KABUL RADIO. HOWEVER, AS THE DAILY DEATH NOTICES INCREASED FROM FIVE MINUTES AIR TIME DURING DAUD'S RULE TO AT LEAST 15 MINUTES DURING THE "NEW EVOLUTIONARY PHASE" OF THE SOUR REVOLUTION, CAUSES OF DEATH ARE NO LONGER BROADCAST.

16. AN INDICATION OF SOVIET CONCERN AT THE INCIDENT COMES TO US THROUGH A SOURCE (PROTECT) WHO SPOKE WITH A RUSSIAN-SPEAKING AFGHAN OFFICIAL FROM THE SALANG AT THE FUNERAL OF A COMMON RELATIVE WHO HAD JUST DIED IN THE TUNNEL. THE AFGHAN OFFICIAL CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN A SOVIET INVESTIGATOR, WHO ARRIVED ON THE SCENE TO INSPECT

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THE DISASTER, BERATING A COUNTRYMAN ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECISION TO BLOCK THE ENDS OF THE TUNNEL. THE TWO MEN ARE SAID TO HAVE LEFT IN A HELICOPTER TOGETHER SHORTLY AFTER THE TONGUE-LASHING HAD BEEN DELIVERED.

17. CONSCRIPTION DRIVE. RENEWED IMPETUS TO FIND BODIES FOR THE MILITARY AND SECURITY SERVICES WAS GIVEN BY THE NOVEMBER 1 RELEASE OF SOLDIERS AND POLICE WHO HAD COMPLETED THEIR THREE YEARS OF SERVICE. THROUGHOUT THE WEEK CHECKPOINTS WERE ESTABLISHED AT MAJOR INTERSECTIONS AROUND THE CITY, MANNED BY SOLDIERS, IPRMHPOLICE, AND MILITARY CADETS WHO CHECKED PAPERS AND SEARCHED VEHICLES FOR WEAPONS. THERE ARE INCREASING REPORTS THAT UNDER AGE, OVER AGE AND OTHER MALES WITH EXEMPTIONS LISTED ON THEIR IDENTIFICATION PAPERS ARE BEING PICKED UP AND TAKEN TO THE COLLECTION POINT AT GHAZI STADIUM. SOVIET AND REGIME OFFICIALS SCAN THE ID'S FOR AUTHENTICITY AND REPORTEDLY TAKE MANY MEN AND BOYS WHO PREVIOUSLY WOULD HAVE BEEN RELEASED. THOUGH DOCUMENTED BUSINESSMEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 35 AND 39 WERE TOLD THEY WOULD RECEIVE SPECIAL EXEMPTION PAPERS, THERE ARE REPORTS THAT MINOR BUSINESSMEN HAVE BEEN PICKED UP AT CHECKPOINTS, CONSCRIPTED, AND FLOWN OUT OF KABUL TO THE FRONT LINES ALL WITHIN 48 HOURS.

18. DRAFTING OF PAKTIA TRIBESHEN. WE HAVE FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THE FERLY OCTOBER DEMONSTRATION BY TRIBESHEN FROM PAKTIA TO PROTEST THE DECISION TO CONSCRIPT MEN FROM THAT SOUTHERN PROVINCE.
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APPARENTLY, HOWEVER, THE REGIME DID NOT RESCIND THE DECISION TO LIFT THE PROVINCE'S TRADITIONAL EXEMPTION AT THE TIME OF THE DEMONSTRATION, BUT ONLY TO RECONSIDER THE MATTER. BUSLOADS OF PAKTIAN ELDERS HAVE BEEN SEEN IN FRONT OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ON THEIR WAY TO PROTEST THE DECISION, AND "MINI- DEMONSTRATION" HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN HELD AROUND TOWN FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS.

19. ACCORDING TO WIDESPREAD RUMORS IN REGIME CIRCLES, THE ARCHITECT OF THE PLAN WAS PRIME MINISTER KESHTMAND, AND THE INITIATIVE HAS COME TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE PARCHAM FACTION OF THE PDPA. MINISTER OF INTERIOR GULABZOI, WHO IS FROM PAKTIA, IS REPORTEDLY OPPOSED TO CONSCRIPTION DECISION AS ARE OTHER KHALQIS. ACCORDING TO ONE CROIBLE BUT AS YET UNCONFIRMED REPORT, GULABZOI AND BABRAK KARMAI RECENTLY MET AND DECIDED TO CONTINUE THE TRADITIONAL EXEMPTION.

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20. THE PANJSHER VALLEY.
WE HAVE RECEIVED CONFIRMATION FROM TWO SOURCES THAT THE

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DESTRUCTION OF HABITATIONS IN THE PANJSHER VALLEY DURING PANJSHER V AND VI WAS NOT TOTAL, THOUGH BOMBING IN THE MAIN AND SIDE VALLEYS CONTINUES. ALTHOUGH SOME VILLAGES HAVE BEEN TOTALLY WIPED OUT, THE DEVASTATION DECREASES AS ONE MOVES NORTHWEST UP THE PANJSHER FROM THE SOUTH. WHILE MOST STRUCTURES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED IN ROKHA AND BAZARAK, MORE HOUSES IN ASTANA AND THE NEIGHBORING VILLAGE OF SANGUNA REMAIN HABITABLE. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, AND CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS REPORTS, KHENJ AND PARIAN WERE RELATIVELY UNDAMAGED.

21. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE VALLEY MAY NOT BE AS DISASTROUS AS WAS EARLIER INDICATED. A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE VALLEY'S POPULATION HAS APPARENTLY RETURNED WITH ONLY RIKHA AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, BAZARKA LEFT UNINHABITABLE. SOME CROPS, INCLUDING GRAPES, HAVE BEEN HARVESTED IN AREAS FAR REMOVED FROM REGIME BASES. RESIDENTS OFTEN SLEEP IN UNDAMAGED AND PARTIALLY DAMAGED STRUCTURES AT NIGHT BUT MOVE TO NEARBY CAVES IN THE MOUNTAINS TO ESCAPE THE DAYTIME BOMBING WHICH HAS CONTINUED AT A LOWER LEVEL THAN DURING SEPTEMBER. ONE SOURCE CONTENTS THAT CURRENTLY THE MAIN PASSES INTO THE VALLEY, NOTABLY THE ANJOMAN TO THE NORTHEAST, VIA NEJRAB FROM THE SOUTH AND THE PASS FROM THE ANDARAB VALLEY TO THE NORTHWEST, ARE OPEN WITH WEAPONS AND SUPPLIES NOW COMING INTO THE VALLEY ON A REGULAR BASIS.

22. FIGHTING IN THE VALLEY CONTINUES. ACCORDING TO ONE PANJSHERI SOURCE (PROTECTA), A REGIME FORCE ATTEMPTING TO MOVE FROM ROKHA TO ITS MAIN BASE AT ANAWA WAS CUT OFF BY RESISTANCE FORCES ON OCTOBER 23. IN THE ENSUING BATTLE, A LARGE NUMBER OF AFGHAN SOLDIERS RALLIED TO THE MUJAHIDEEN, A SMALLER NUMBER WERE KILLED, AND THE REMAINDER FELL BACK TO ROKHA. THE SAME SOURCE ADDS THAT THE GARRISON AT ROKHA IS HARRASSED CONSTANTLY BY RESISTANCE UNITS. SINCE THE ROAD BETWEEN ASTANA AND ROKHA IS NO LONGER SECURE, CONFIDENTIAL
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MANY OF THE SUPPLIES FOR THE GARRISON AT ROKHA MUST BE BROUGHT IN BY HELICOPTER. IN THE FACE OF THIS SITUATION, DESERTIONS FROM REGIME UNITS ARE A DAILY OCCURRENCE.
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